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Pannasastra University Wins National Mock Trial Competition

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
September 5, 2008



U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Piper Campbell presents the winning team from Pannasastra University of Cambodia a gold medal and cup during the second annual Mock Trial Competition.

A team from Pannasastra University of Cambodia won the second annual Mock Trial Competition, a contest that tests the legal and advocacy skills of talented Cambodian law students. The three-day event, which concluded with an awards ceremony on September 5, was sponsored by USAID and hosted by the University of Cambodia.

"I am so excited to have won this competition. The students from the other teams are all very smart and come from some of the most prestigious law schools in Cambodia," said Tep Sokunvannary, a member of the winning team.

"I have learned a lot of new skills and techniques that will help me in my legal career."

The competition featured eight teams of five students and was presided over by a mixed panel of international and Cambodian legal professionals. The contest is designed to improve the competence of the Cambodian legal system by strengthening the skills of students who will soon embark on careers as lawyers and judges.

Throughout several rounds of competition, the teams were presented with difficult legal cases and had to organize evidence around a theory and persuasively argue their case to the panel of judges. A team from the University of Cambodia won the silver medal.

In addition to the winners, teams from Mekong University, Build Bright University, and the Royal University of Law and Economics participated in the competition. The panel of judges was composed of Cambodians and expatriate legal professionals.

USAID has provided approximately \$2 million this year to strengthen Cambodia's legal system by training judges and lawyers and by providing the public with greater access to information about the courts.

The Winning Teams

Gold Medal – Pannasastra University of Cambodia: Ms. Tep Sokunvannary, Ms. Pon Sokuntheara, Mr. Phouy Keo Ratanak, Mr. Kong Sidoeun and Mr. Sim Hong Seang.

Silver Medal – University of Cambodia: Ms. Lim Sreysros, Ms. Po Vannary, Mr. Heng Kanal, Mr. Mao Sovanratha, and Mr. Van Chanphila.